



The Aria of She

L. Margetts-Bullock

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In the urban fantasy novel The Aria of She, a young woman in a troubled relationship learns to lean on her friends, her family, and herself.

In L. Margetts-Bullock's fantasy novel *The Aria of She*, a siren falls under the spell of a charming vampire.

In the city of Nemoda, supernatural races have reached an uneasy alliance based on clear divisions and stratified social circles. Blaise, a siren, flounces across those divisions, though, thanks to her unmatched beauty and vivacious personality—and a bit of help from her latent siren ability to sway others through song.

On Blaise's twenty-first birthday, she is surprised by her unusual, uncontrollable psychic powers: objects go flying around her, thoughts creep into her mind, and random voices whisper in her ear. At her party, Blaise catches the eye of a vampire coven lead by Nius. Nius sweeps Blaise away from her comfortable life and into a world of wealth, extravagance, and violence. As the powers growing within Blaise threaten her family and her friends, Nius nurses his sinister ulterior motives.

Nemoda holds interest through its blend of medieval, supernatural, and modern features. The city is ringed by massive walls that are imbued with magic and guarded. Internally, it is quartered off and modern, with clubs, workplaces, and stores. The world outside of Nemoda is seen in intriguing glimpses—of a massive estate surrounded by packs of feral monsters, and of isolated beaches and unnamed tribal powers. Nemoda feels grungy and lived in; the outside world seems more fresh and less constrictive. The contrasts are strong.

Blaise grows as she endures internal and external horrors. As her siren powers manifest, they explode outward, leading to intense internal debates. She endures trauma because of her abusive relationship with Nius, which soon overshadows her supernatural concerns, and is cut off from her loved ones. Her friends—including a protective werewolf, a shy elf, and a scatterbrained pixie, Noo—are also touched upon, reflecting on Blaise in her absence. Their views on her make her more engaging, too, making it so that the impact of her pain is felt.

The text balances tension with world building well. An early scene in a club captures its hectic frivolity; in contrast, Blaise's seclusion is subdued, and her sense of fun is diminished. In one poignant scene, Blaise brings a friend to her favorite cove, which is described in poetic terms that capture both the environment and her emotional turmoil.

Balancing emotional scenes with violent ones, the book builds in time with the changing relationship between Blaise and Nius, until she realizes that she's trapped. The shocking epilogue provides a segue into future series titles.

In the urban fantasy novel *The Aria of She*, a young woman enters a troubled relationship, but also learns to trust her friends, her family, and herself.

JOHN M. MURRAY (April 22, 2021)

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